Righteous Pups Australia Inc

Autism Assistance Dog Program
Information Pack

www.righteouspups.org.au
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TOGETHER WE CAN...

Each Assistance Dog will cost $29,000 over an 18 month period to train, socialize and place with a child with Autism Spectrum Disorders. Together we can change the lives of special children.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?
- SPONSOR A PUP IN TRAINING.
- MAKE A TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION.
- GET YOUR STAFF OR SOCIAL CUB INVOLVED IN A FUNDRAISER.
- PLACE A DONATION BOX AT YOUR WORKPLACE.
- VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME.
- VOLUNTEER YOUR EXPERTISE.
- ENROLL YOUR PUPPY IN A PUPPY KINDA COURSE THROUGH YOUR LOCAL PETSTOCK STORE.

HOW DO YOU CONTACT RIGHTEOUS PUPS?

Righteous Pups Australia is endorsed by the Australian Taxation Office as a Deductible Gift Recipient, which means,

donations of $2.00 or more are tax deductible.

OUR SPONSORS & PARTNERS

Our mission is to train, socialize and place Assistance Dogs for children with ASD at no cost to the recipient and their family.

It is through the generosity and support of our sponsors and partners that we are able to make this dream a reality for some very special children and their families.

Righteous Pups Australia
P.O. Box 429, Golden Square, VIC 3555
Phone: 0439 618 706
email: bakerj@righteouspups.org.au
web: www.righteouspups.org.au

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AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS

The term ‘Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)’ is an umbrella term used to group five pervasive developmental disorders listed in the Diagnostic and Statistical manual of mental disorders DSM-IV-TR and includes Autism and Asperger’s Syndrome.

ASD are almost always present at birth but do not become evident until about 2 or 3 years of age or 5 or 6 in the case of Asperger’s disorder. The cause of ASD remains a mystery and there is no cure. Modern day interventions target management and family support. ASD disorders are lifelong disabilities characterized by significant degrees of impairment in communication skills, social interaction, and restricted, repetitive and stereotyped patterns of behaviour.

Statistics

The Autism Council of Australia (2004) research indicates:

- 1 in 100 Australians are touched by ASD.
- 1 in 500 Australians have an ASD.
- About 17 children are diagnosed with ASD every week.
- Around 50% of children diagnosed with ASD will never develop meaningful speech.
- ASD’s are ten times more common than cystic fibrosis and muscular dystrophy combined
- ASD are more common than multiple sclerosis, down syndrome and childhood cancer.
- Males are four times more susceptible than females.
- ASD’s do not discriminate and can be found in all ethnic groups and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Righteous Pups Australia was established in 2003 with our mission to raise, socialize and train assistance dogs for children and adults with disabilities.

Since our inception, Righteous Pups has continually expanded resulting in a greater number of programs and services offered. Our vision was revealed when we were contacted by a family in Bendigo in 2005. This family had a daughter with Autism and they hoped to have an assistance dog trained specifically for their daughter. At the time, this request was beyond our expertise so we embarked on a national search to find an organisation that could assist. Surprisingly, after months of research and investigation, we could not find one such organisation in Australia.

However, we did discover the international leaders in training Assistance Dogs for Children with ASD, ‘4 Paws for Ability’ based in Xenia, USA. In 2006 we sent our training manager Kelly Stevens to complete a Cadetship with ‘4 Paws’ and upon her return we purchased our first litter of Assistance Dogs in training.

ASSISTANCE DOG TRAINING

Children with ASD will have both general and specific needs for an assistance dog. Our dogs are trained for a number of general supporting behaviours and when its time to place the dog with a child we “partner” with the family for specific training needs.

Children with ASD have the propensity to wander off— even from a secure environment. Escape can lead to a life-threatening situation. Some children with ASD do not respond to their name and they rarely comprehend environmental dangers. Our assistance dogs are trained to find the child in any environment and to alert parents or carers.

Children with ASD live in a world where they participate in ritualistic and repetitive behaviours, which eventually cause over stimulation and result in a meltdown. Our Assistance dogs are trained to gently and lovingly interrupt these behaviours so the child can move beyond the behaviour.

There is a magical relationship that exists between children with ASD and their Assistance Dogs. These special kids often have very few friends because they struggle to form and maintain social relationships. The Assistance Dog becomes a pivotal companion and a gateway for other children to connect with the child. Children with ASD have been observed to seek out their assistance dog for companionship, comfort and confidence, in ways never shown to their most intimate family members.

together we can...
Hello Families,

Well, it is all about to happen... we are about 12 to 16 weeks away from placing our first litter of Autism Assistance Dogs, with families throughout Australia. As you can imagine we are both exhausted and excited to finally be making a dent in our ever growing waiting list. We have a number of new dogs who have entered the program.

The Waiting List:

It has always been a core value of Righteous Pups that our families would never have to pay one cent towards obtaining an Autism Assistance Dog. Recently, some of the team from 4 Paws for Ability traveled to us to have a look at our program. I got to sit down with Karen Shirk and talk about our waiting list and a need to make sure families are not waiting long periods to access a dog. Karen started with the same values, but realized over time that a natural byproduct would be long waiting lists and long waiting periods. Since, they have made some crucial changes they are now finding families are only waiting 12 to 18 months. That is impressive when you consider that most Autism Assistance Dogs will not be placed until they are 18 months old, allowing for necessary growth in maturity.

Karen explained their waiting list is similar to the Habitat for Humanity’s model of sweat equity. From here in, Righteous Pups waiting list will work not on a basis of first in best dress, but on volunteer equity. We will partner with our families to raise the funds for their Autism Assistance Dog within their natural networks and local communities. Families will hopefully feel empowered and now be in a position to rally their local communities together to assist them to raise their volunteer equity total. Each family will volunteer to raise funds for Righteous Pups Australia and once we reach the equity total we will advise the family and prepare the Autism Assistance Dog. Some families will be natural fundraisers and other families will put their heart and soul into it but might not find it so easy. In such situations, if the first family is able to reach and exceed their equity total those additional funds will be attributed to the second family who is really working hard but finding it a little harder going.

Now, at first thought, $29,000 seems like a lot of money to raise, but let me give you some hope. Let me tell you about little Tara O’Connell. Tara is 3 years old and suffers from Williams Syndrome. Cheri and David, Tara’s parents, contacted us back in May of this year. They were desperate for a Seizure Alert Assistance Dog for Tara because she has about 80 seizures a day, even on medication. When Cheri asked us for help we explained that we were deeply committed to our Autism Assistance Dog program and we just couldn’t afford energy or financially, to compromise our
program by diversifying into a second program at this point in time. However, that as we grow we will endeavour to add additional Assistance Dog Programs. Anyway, Cheri is a passionate mum with a determined spirit to overcome any obstacles in her path, and as such, we told Cheri and David we would help but we had to raise the funds first because we couldn’t take away from our families on the Autism Assistance Dog Program. Let me tell you what an amazing journey the past 3 months have been. Since June this year, we have raised $16,068.50 towards Tara’s dog from business and families within the O’Connell’s local community and personal network. Cheri contacted the Today Tonight program and they ran a story about Tara; The Sun Herald ran two stories and one was a front page story. The local Berwick Journal has run numerous stories and joined with us to get the community involved. There are several other community groups preparing to raise funds for Tara and I am confident that it will only take us another 6-8 weeks before we have raised all the money for Tara’s dog.

By changing the way we organize the waiting list, will hopefully give our families hope and will help us grow faster, which means more dogs available to more families.

The Process:

Step 1: Application and Interview:

The first step of obtaining an Autism Assistance Dog will be the completion of the application form and references. Once an application form is completed and received, including two independent references, these documents are reviewed by our executive and assessment team. These teams assess each applicants needs and our ability to meet those needs.

Once assessed, each Applicant is then interviewed, often over the phone, to determine what the Autism Assistance Dog will be trained to do to assist each family. Once the family’s needs are established, the fundraising requirement or volunteer equity for the family is determined and contracts are sent to the family for completion and return to RPA.

The volunteer equity requirement is the amount of money the applicant and RPA will work together to raise within the applicants natural networks and local community.

Step 2: Completion of the Contract

Upon receipt of the signed volunteer equity contract from the applicant, the applicant formally becomes a client of Righteous Pups Australia. The client is then empowered to begin to fundraise, as a volunteer, to reach the fundraising goal stipulated in the equity contract. Any excess funds raised about the volunteer equity total will be allocated to another family at the discretion of RPA and will be based on volunteer effort.
Step 3: Fundraising

Both RPR and the client begin working together to fundraise for an Autism Assistance Dog, within the client’s networks and local community. All funds raised are in the name of Righteous Pups Australia and are sent to our head office, PO Box 429 Golden Square, Victoria, 3555. The funds raised are deposited into the RPA bank account and credited to the respective client’s volunteer equity fundraising total.

RPA, through open and general donations and proceeds from grants, sponsorship programs, and excess funds raised by other families, can be apportion to assist other clients reach their fundraising total, at the discretion of Righteous Pups Australia executive management.

Step 4: Autism Assistance Dog Selection

Once a client has reached the volunteer equity total required to meet the costs of training an Autism Assistance Dog an appropriate service dog will be selected for that client. Dog selection is based on the client’s needs, temperament and capacity to bond with the recipient child. RPA will select a dog from a number of sources e.g. a dog already in the program, from our breeding program, dogs in foster care etc.

Step 5: Final Stage: Uniting the Client family with an Autism Assistance Dog.

Once we have raised the necessary funds, the right dog has been selected and trained for the client, then the client will travel to Bendigo, Victoria and spend ten days in training to make sure the client and family are able to appropriately handle, lead, command and bond with their Autism Assistance Dog. Upon completion of the training families will return home with their Autism Assistance Dog and will liaise with our training manager to ensure a smooth transition. RPA will then provide ongoing support where needed.

To ensure public access certification RPA are required to re-certify the Autism Assistance Dog on a yearly basis.

Final comment:

From all of us at Righteous Pups, we would like to thank you for your kind words and your encouragements. We are passionate about what we do and are working hard to support all our families. Phone interviews will begin over the next few weeks and volunteer equity contracts are also being prepared to be sent out. I would love to hear your thoughts and comments regarding the changes to the waiting list and the process towards receiving an Autism Assistance Dog.

Kind Regards,

Joanne Baker and the Team at Righteous Pups Australia.
APPLICATION FOR AN ASSISTANCE DOG
for a CHILD with an Autism Spectrum Disorder
(Under 18 years of age)

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

PARENT INFORMATION - MOTHER

Name: __________________________ DOB: __________________________

Address: ___________________________________ Email: ____________

Suburb: __________ State: __________ Post Code: __________

Phone: __________ Work: __________ Mobile: __________

PARENT INFORMATION - FATHER

Name: __________________________ Date: __________________________

Address: ___________________________________ Email: ____________

Suburb: __________ State: __________ Post Code: __________

Phone: __________ Work: __________ Mobile: __________

CHILD’S INFORMATION

Name: __________________________ DOB: __________________________

Address: ___________________________________ Email: ____________

Suburb: __________ State: __________ Post Code: __________

Phone: __________
PLEASE LIST CONTACTS OTHER THAN PARENT’S

Emergency Contact: Name: ______________________ Phone:________________

Alternate Contact: Name: ______________________ Phone:________________

Physician: ________________________________ May we contact? Y/ N

Address:______________________________ Phone: ______________________

Suburb: ______________ State: _______ Post Code:__________

If Applicable:

Physical Therapist: ______________________ Phone:________________

Occupational Therapist: ______________________ Phone:________________

Other: ________________________________ Phone:________________

Diagnosis

What is the primary diagnosis for your child?
________________________________________________________________________

What there additional medical problems/disabilities confronting your child?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Please use a separate sheet of paper if more space is needed for any question.
How does your child’s condition affect their daily living skills? What are your son/daughter’s limitations?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Are there restrictions or precautions as a result of your child’s diagnosis?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

What type of medical treatment is your child currently receiving?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
What medication is your child presently taking and please describe the specific purposes of the medication?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

What types of adaptive equipment does your child use (i.e. Wheelchair, hearing aid)?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Employment (For children ages 16 – 17 and adult applicants)

Are they employed or engage in volunteer activities? Y / N

Employer/ Volunteer Organisation:

________________________________________________________________________

Address: _______________________________________________________________________

Suburb: __________________________ State: __________ Post Code: __________

Phone: __________________________ May we contact? Y / N

Core duties:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Do they have a Job Coach? Y/N

If so: Name: __________________________ Phone: __________________________

Agency Name:

________________________________________________________________________

Address: _______________________________________________________________________ 

Do you have any other social services contacts for your child? Y/N

Agency: __________________________ Contact: __________________________

Address:

________________________________________________________________________
Phone: __________________________

Service Provided: ____________________________________________

Do you have any other social services contacts for your child? Y/N

Agency: ___________________________ Contact: ___________________________

Address:
________________________________________________________________________

Phone: __________________________

Service Provided: ____________________________________________

Household Information (when families are split please list primary information below and attach a separate sheet of paper with the same information if the dog would be spending any time at the other parent’s residence.)

Family Environment:

Type of home does your child reside in (3 bedroom, villa):
________________________________________________________________________

Do you Rent/Own/ Other: ____________________________________________

Do you have fenced yard? Y / N  If not, do you plan to fence the Yard? Y/N

Who lives in the home?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
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Are there pets in the home?

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<th>Species:</th>
<th>Name:</th>
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<th>M/F</th>
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Do they live inside?  Y / N   If not: Where do the pets that live outside reside?
Assistance Dog Placement

Is the child physically able to handle the dog? Y/N If not: Who will handle the dog for them? Please provide as much information as you can:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

• Will you be able to feed the dog, the food stipulated by us ($25 - $50 a month)? Y/N Can your child participate in the feeding of the dog? Y/N

• Can you bathe and groom the dog? Y/N. If not, can you afford to pay for dog grooming? ($30 - $70 3-4 times a year) Y/N. Can your child participate in grooming of the dog? Y/N.

• Can you afford to pay for Veterinary Services that will be required throughout the life of the dog Y/N.

(If you answered no to any of the above questions please explain how these essential elements of canine health care will be taken care of)

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
What tasks do you think an assistance dog could do to assist your child to be more independent?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Does your child want an assistance dog? Why do they want an assistance dog? Please record their answer to this question.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Do you want this dog to go to school with your child? Y / N. If so, have you discussed this with the appropriate teachers and/or school administrators? Y / N. What was their response?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
How do you believe an assistance dog will benefit you as a parent? If you have other children what do they think of your child with ASD having their own dog? It is often necessary for your child with ASD to be the primary caregiver, the only one to give the dog attention, treats and play with the dog. Is this something the rest of the family would be prepared to deal with? Sometimes having a dog is like having another child will you be able to cope with this additional responsibility?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Is there anything else you feel you need to let us know?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

If your child is able to share and express their feelings about having an assistance dog? We would appreciate a letter or picture expressing their desire to have an assistance dog (Please attach this to your application form).

References: Please have two people not related to you, complete and privately mail the enclosed reference letters to our office.

Parent’s signature: ________________________________

Date: ________________________________

Righteous Pups Australia reserves the right to deny services to any applicant which doesn’t meet the criteria necessary for placement of an assistance dog for a child with Autism Spectrum Disorder or services not within the guidelines of this organisation.
RELEASE OF INFORMATION

I, ________________________________
consent and request you to supply Righteous Pups Australia, Inc. with any
medical and social information which you may have, that is based upon your
knowledge of, or records about, me or my child.

This information is part of the necessary data to complete my application for an
Assistance Dog for my child with Autism Spectrum Disorder so a dog can be
trained and certified by Righteous Pups Australia, Inc.

This information is designed to help Righteous Pups Australia, Inc to understand
and assess my request for an assistance dog for my child with Autism Spectrum
Disorder. Any copy of this form and signature may be used as an original for
release of information purposes.

Signature: ______________________________________________________

Date: __________________________________________________________________

Name: __________________________________________________________________

Address __________________________________________________________________

If applicant is a child:

Parent or Legal Guardian Signature: ______________________________________

Date: __________________________________________________________________

Name: __________________________________________________________________

Address: __________________________________________________________________
LETTER OF REFERENCE

_____________________________, is applying for an assistance dog for their child ________________ through our organisation.

Could you please take a moment to fill out this form and return to Righteous Pups Australia, Inc Po Box 429, Golden Square, Victoria 3555.

Name: _________________________ Phone Number: ________________ Day/Night

Address:________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Relationship to the Applicant: ____________________________________________

How long have you known the applicant? ______

How long have you known the child? ______

How does the disability affect the functional abilities of the child?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Can you tell us about the child? Do you think they would benefit from the use of an assistance dog? Do you think they have the ability to handle the dog? If not, do the parents?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
In your opinion, do you feel the child and/or parents have the ability to care for the dog? If not, do they have a support system in place that would be available on a daily-weekly basis to assist in the care of the dog?

Have you observed the child/family with animals, how did they interact? If they have pets, are they well cared for? Do they live inside or outside?

Additional Comments:

Signature: ___________________________  Date: ________________

Thank you for your assistance in providing this letter of reference for the applicant and her Service Dog!
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